



29 January 2019

Senator Justin Wayne, Chair
Members of the Urban Affairs Committee
Nebraska Legislature

RE: LB66

Chairman Wayne and Members of the Urban Affairs Committee,

Chairman Wayne, members of the Urban Affairs Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Elizabeth Everett and I am Policy Associate with First Five Nebraska. I am here today to testify in support of LB66.

Nebraska has roughly 58,000 vacant jobs. While efforts are being made to attract a workforce from outside the state, we must also look inwards to make the greatest use of the potential talent pool already in Nebraska. Strengthening our early childhood infrastructure in communities can make it possible for more people to fully participate in the workforce who might otherwise be prevented from doing so by limited access to quality child care options. Not only will quality early learning and child care programs help our current workforce stay on the job, but they will also help strengthen Nebraska's future talent pipeline by helping our youngest citizens develop the necessary cognitive and behavioral skills needed to be successful in school and later in life.

LB66 would require Nebraska's metropolitan, primary, first- and second-class cities to incorporate an assessment of their early childhood infrastructure into their comprehensive plans. This bill would provide communities the opportunity to assess their current early childhood programs, including the availability of licensed child care providers. It would also allow these communities to identify any gaps that may exist in their current early childhood infrastructure.

First Five Nebraska feels strongly that LB66 will provide communities the accountability and transparency they need to improve their existing early care and learning programs. It will help communities deepen their talent pool and close the achievement gap for young children facing risk factors that threaten their success in school and help lay the foundation for our state's long-term economic prosperity.

Thank you again for allowing me to testify today. I welcome any questions you might have at this time.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Lopez Everett
Policy Associate
First Five Nebraska